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S E R M O N

Preach'd at

St. P A U L 's Cathedral,

NOVEMBER 22. 1699.

BEING

The ANNIVERSARY Meeting

OF THE

Lovers of M u s i c k.

By *W. SHERLOCK*, D.D. Dean of St. Paul's, Master
of the Temple, and Chaplain in Ordinary to His MAJESTY.

Published at the Request of the Stewards.

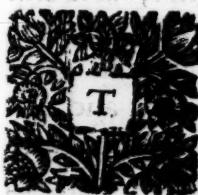
L O N D O N :

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PSALM LXXXI. 1, 2.

*Sing aloud unto God our strength, make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob.
Take a Psalm, and bring bitter the Timbrel, the pleasant Harp, with the Psaltery.*



O Praise God is acknowledged by all men to be the most Excellent part of Divine Worship ; it is the Religion of happy Creatures, and the Natural Homage due to Infinite Goodness, which is the most Glorious Perfection of the Deity. It exercises the best Passions of our Souls in the most perfect manner, *Love, Joy, Reverence, Admiration*, which are the proper Passions of Devotion, made for God, who is their last Object, and made for the Praise of God, which is their most perfect Exercise. We cannot well conceive, What other Acts of Religion can be proper for Heaven ; when we shall be advanced to the utmost perfection of our Natures ; when

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we shall have put off Mortality and Corruption, and all other Wants with them ; When a Complete and Consummate Happiness shall leave no more place for Desire ; When we shall have nothing more to ask of God, nothing more to expect, but the secure Possession and Enjoyment of those Pleasures which fill, but never satiate ; which are Eternally repeated, and are Eternally New and Fresh : I say, in such a State as this, as Faith will be turned into Sight, and Hope into Enjoyment ; so Prayer also, which is so great a part of the Worship of Sinners, and impudent Creatures, will be all turned into Thanksgiving and Praise. Now as for this reason St. Paul prefers Charity before Faith and Hope ; because, though they are admirable Graces for the State of Christians in this World, and absolutely necessary to carry us to Heaven ; yet they cannot enter into Heaven themselves, where Charity attains its greatest Glory and Perfection ; so by the same reason it appears, That Praise and Thanksgiving is the most excellent part of Worship, because this is the Religion of Heaven, and therefore ought to be the chief Delight and Enter-

Entertainment of those who hope to go to Heaven.

But what is it to praise God? Is it only to sing aloud, and to make a joyful noise to God? Does it consist merely in the Harmonious Melody of Voices, and Musical Instruments? Does he praise God best, who composes the best Anthems, or Sings them best? Or do we think, that we then praise God best, when we feel our selves the most Transported and Ravished with Excellent Musick, performed by the best Voices, the choicest Instruments, and the greatest Masters? This is a very easy and a pleasant way of praising God, if this would carry us to Heaven; but this is only to praise the Musick, the Composition, or the Performance, when we think of nothing else, come for no other End, and mean no more by it. I would not have you mistake me; I do not appear in this place at this time to decry or disparage the use of Musick in the Worship of God, which would neither become this Presence, nor my own Character; but to persuade and direct you to turn the Delights and Charms of Musick, into the Raptures of Devotion, which would

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the most effectually silence all the Enemies of Church-Musick, and Cathedral-Worship, while as a Divine Poet of our own Sings, This would visibly turn Delight into a Sacrifice.

Now since Musick, whatever it be, and how well soever performed, is of no Use or Value in Religion, but as it serves the true Ends of Devotion; we must Enquire, *What that Harmony and Melody is, which is so acceptable to God; How fit External and Sensible Melody is to promote this; And how it may and ought to be improved to that purpose.*

1. As for the first, I need not tell any Man, who understands the Nature of Christian Worship, That it is only the Melody of the Heart, as St. Paul speaks, that pleases God; All True Christian Worship, whatever the Externals of it are, is the Worship of the Mind and Spirit. This alone is that Worship which it becomes a reasonable Creature to pay to his Maker, his Sovereign Lord and Saviour, as the Blessed Virgin Sang, *My Soul doth magnify the Lord, and my Spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.* For it is the Mind

Mind only that can praise God, though the Tongue must Sing his Praises. The Best Composed Hymns, the Most Musical Instruments, the most Charming Voices, are but Lifeless Mechanical Sounds, till they are Animated and Inspired by the Devotion of the Heart; And God takes no more pleasure in the Best Voices, than in Bodily Strength or Beauty. Now the Melody of the Heart, is the Consent and Harmony of all the Powers and Passions of our Souls in the Praises of God. When Love, and Joy, and Admiration, and the profoundest Reverence bear their several Parts, and offer up our whole Souls as a Living Vocal Hymn of Praise: Then we Sing aloud in our Hearts to God, when we feel the greatest Transports and Extasies of these Divine Passions, which Swallow us up in God, and Unite us to the Heavenly Quire: Then we Sing with True Melody in our Hearts to God, when these Divine Passions, which are Essential to Praise and Thanksgiving, Charm all our Earthly Passions into a Calm; Quiet all their Storms and Tumults; Leave no jarring Discords, no Discontents, no Solicitous Cares, no Jealousies, no Envynings,

ings, to discompose the Harmony of our Souls, which must be all Peace, all Love, all Joy, to Sing with a True Divine Melody the Praises of God. This, and nothing else, is the true Praise of God, when our Minds are filled with such bright Ideas of his Glory and Perfections, with such a lively Sense of His Majesty, Wisdom, Goodness, Power, discover'd in his Great and Wonderful Works of Creation, Providence, and the Redemption of the World by our Lord Jesus Christ, as Transport us with Love, Admiration, and Joy. A Heart thus full of God, will break forth into Songs of Praise; *When the Fire is kindled within*, as the Psalmist observes from his own Experience, *we shall then speak with our Tongues*; Here our Praises ought to Begin, to be sure here they must always End, in the Heat and Fervour of our Affections, and an inward feeling of the Divine Praises, if we would have them an acceptable Worship of God. As far as the Harmony of Voices or Musical Instruments serve this End, they are Excellent Helps to Devotion; but it is only their Subserviency to the Devotion of the Mind, which gives them any Value, or

or allows them any Place in Religious Worship.

2dly. Let us then consider of what Use Musick is to Excite and Quicken our Affections, and to give a New Life and Spirit to Devotion. Man is not all Soul and Spirit, but a Compound Creature, consisting of Soul and Body; And while our Souls are Vitally united to Bodies, they receive most of their Passions from them; at least feel the most Strong and Vigorous Motions from those Impressions which our Senses make; And Sight it self does not more variously affect our Minds than Hearing does; Words and Sounds have very powerful Charms, and give as quick a turn to our Thoughts and Passions, as Sight it self; and not only Words, but even a Diversity of Sounds, are fitted by Nature to Express, and to Excite very different Passions. Love, Joy, Admiration, Desire, Fear, Sorrow, Indignation, Revenge, give some distinguishing Notes and Accents to the very Voice, which no Art, but Nature Teaches, and which betrays the Passion without speaking a Word; And such different Notes will

also as forcibly imprint such Passions on our Minds, as they naturally represent, and that many times whether we will or no; which is a great secret in Nature, and shows an unaccountable Sympathy between Sounds and Passions, which are by turns the Natural Effects and Causes of each other: and there needs no other Proof what the Natural Power of Musick must be, to Raise and to Calm our Passions; And the Experience of all Mankind tells us that thus it is; When the Composer knows how to fit Notes to Passions, which the Knowledge of Human Nature, not the meer proportion of Sounds must teach him. Without this, a Fine Piece of Musick is like a Company of Fine Words put together, without any great Sense or Meaning; they make a Fine Sound, and that is all.

Now if there be a Natural Sympathy and Mutual Causality between Sounds and Passions, there is no doubt, but True Devotional Musick will Excite or Heighten our Devotional Passions, as we daily see and complain, that Wanton and Amorous Aires are apt to kindle

Wanton

Wanton Fires ; For Nature will act like it self, whether you apply it to Good or to Bad Purposes. If there be no force in Musick to give a Good or Bad Tincture to the Mind, Why do any men complain of Wanton Songs ? They may then blame the Poet, but neither the Composer nor Singer ; For the Musick, it seems, does no hurt : if there be, Why do they Condemn Church-Musick, which will have as good an influence upon a Devout Mind, as the other has a Bad One ?

Why then should any Man think Musick improper for the Worship of God ? It is a Natural Power, though improved by Art, as most other Natural Powers are ; and all Natural Powers are made for the Worship and Service of God , as far as they are capable of serving him ; which Musick is in a very high Degree, if it have such a Natural Power over our Passions, as to Increase and Actuate, though it can't Create Devotion.

Both Poetry and Musick were Originally used to Celebrate the Praises of God ; lost their Glory, when they descended to meaner Subjects,

Subjects, but were Prophaned by a Prostitution to mens Lusts and Vices. The first Account we have of Singing, is the Song of *Moses*, Exod. 15. when God had made the Children of *Israel* to pass through the Red-Sea on dry Ground, and had Drowned the *Ægyptians*; and we can't have a more Ancient Account than this, which is the most Ancient History in the World. And throughout the Old Testament, both Vocal and Instrumental Musick, was not only used in the Worship of God; but this was the Chief, if not the only Use of it. This is acknowledged by all; but some will not allow it to be a Pattern for Christian Worship. They reckon Musick among the Ceremonies of the *Jewish* Law, fitted to the Carnal State of that People, and Abrogated with the other Legal Ceremonies, by the more perfect Dispensation of the Gospel, which requires a more Spiritual Worship. But a few Words will shew, how unreasonable this Pretence is.

The Song of *Moses* and *Miriam* was before the giving of the Law, and therefore no part of it; and though this is the first time

time we Read of Singing, there is no Reason to think, That this was the first beginning of it. We Read of no Institution of Singing, though we do of Singers; that Singing seems as Ancient and Natural, as Publick Worship.

But suppose Singing had been part of the Mosaical Law; the Gospel of our Saviour Abrogates nothing of that Law, but such Types as receive their Accomplishment in Christ, or such Appendant Ceremonies as were meer Signs and Figures of an Evangelical Righteousness: But what is Singing a Type of, any more than Speaking? For it is only a more Harmonious and Emphatical way of Speaking; and I see no Reason, Why men may not reject Vocal Prayer, as well as Vocal Musick, because they were both used by the *Jews*. Whatever Objections are now made against Church-Musick, which I have not now Time particularly to Examine, were as good Objections in David's Time, as they are now; and yet then Prophets Composed Hymns, and Prophets set the Tunes; for so the Chief Musicians to whom

whom David directs his Psalms, as the Titles of some of them Express, were Prophets as well as Musicians; and methinks Men should speak more favourably of such Practices as were under the Direction and Government of Inspired men.

In the Vision of the Prophet *Isaiah*, 6 Ch. 1, 2, 3. v. The Seraphims are represented crying one to another, *Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts, Heaven and Earth are full of his Glory.* This is acknowledged to be a great Example of Antiphonal Singing, in which One Answers another. But then they say, this plainly refers to the Ancient Temple-Worship, and must not be admitted a Precedent for Christian Practice. But if the Temple-Worship be a fit Precedent for the Worship of Angels, Why may it not be a Precedent for the Worship of Christians? Whose Worship, as Pure and Spiritual as it is, falls vastly short of Angelical Worship. But do not the Angels then thus Worship God in Heaven? This would be a New Objection against our Liturgy, never thought of before, which in the *Te Deum* teaches us to Sing, *To Thee all Angels*

cry

cry aloud, the heavens and all the powers
therein.

To Thee Cherubin and Seraphin continually
do cry,

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sab-
aoth.

Heaven and Earth are full of the Majesty
of thy Glory.

And if the Angels thus Sing in Heaven,
surely the Precedent is not unworthy of the
Christian Church on Earth.

The like Representation we meet with of
the Four Beasts, and Twenty four Elders,
Rev 4 And the same Answer is given to it, That
the Images in the Apocalyptic Visions are fetched
from the Law, and not from the Gospel. But
whence soever these Images were Originally
taken, this Book was Directed to the Christian
Churches, and therefore was a Rule
and Precedent for them. It all along describes
the State of the Christian, not of the Jewish
Church, and therefore their Worship too :
And

And if we look into the Fifth Chapter, we shall find these Four Beasts, and Twenty Four Elders were Christians, who were Redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb, and Sung the Song of the Lamb; Thou art worthy to take the Book, and to open the Seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast Redeemed us to God, out of every Kindred, and Tongue, and People, and Nation, and hast made us unto our God Kings and Priests, and we shall Reign upon the Earth, Ver. 9, 10. This I take to be a Christian Hymn, and therefore a Pattern for Christian Worship.

And as much as some Smile at the Conceit, I can't but think, That the General Exhortations in the New Testament, to Sing to God, To admonish one another in Psalms, and Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, Singing and Making Melody in our Hearts to the Lord; Though they are not an Apostolical Institution of a Quire, nor do prescribe the particular Forms of Cathedral Worship; yet they justify it all, as far as it is fitted to the True Ends of Devotion; for the Apostles knew after what manner they Sung in

in the Jewish Church ; and had this been so unfit, as is pretended for Christian Worship, they would not have Exhorted Christians to Sing, without giving them a Cau-
tion against Jewish Singing.

And now it does not seem to me much to the purpose, to Enquire whether this Practice was for any time intermitted in the Christian Church ; and When, and upon What Occasion it was Restored ; For if what I have now Discoursed hold good, it justifies the Use of Musick in Religious Worship, whenever it can be had ; though there may be some Times and Circumstances, which will not allow it. Though it could be certainly proved, That this was disused for the First Three Centuries in the Christian Church, while they were under a State of Persecution : This would be no greater Argument to me against Cathedral-Worship, than it is against Cathedral-Churches : The Poverty and Afflicted State of the Church at that Time would allow neither ; but Prosperity by Degrees restored them to both. We may as well Argue
C 2 against

against the Use of Music in the Jewish Church, because under the Babylonish Captivity they hung their Harps upon the Willows, and refused to Sing the Songs of Zion in a Strange Land, to those who carried them away Captives. The Primitive Christians in those Days never declared their dislike of this way of Worship, but their Condition would not bear it. No Christian will deny, That Singing the Praises of God and their Saviour, was always a Principal part of Christian Worship, and therefore was the Worship of the Primitive Christians, unless they were Defective in a Principal Part of Worship; so that the only Dispute can be about the manner of Singing; and the Chief thing Objected, is the *Antiphonal way of Singing*; which is acknowledged to have been used in the Jewish Church, and therefore has the same Authority that Singing has: But yet I will yield the Cause, if any Man can give me a good reason, Why it should be very Lawful, and an Excellent Part of Religion, for a hundred Men, suppose, to Sing a whole Psalm together; but very Unlawful and

and a Corruption of Religion, to Sing it Alterately, Fifty to Sing One Verse, and Fifty the Next, when by their Answering each other, they mutually Excite each other's Devotion, and signify the Consent and Union of their Prayers and Praises in the Whole.

But setting aside the Afflicted State of the Christian Church, the Profess'd Enemies of Cathedral-Worship allow us as Great and Early Authorities as we desire. St. Basil, St. Ambrose, and St. Chrysostom, always will be Venerable Names. The Church was restored to Peace but in the Fourth Century, and then this Worship revived, and that by the Authority and Example of as Great and Good Men as any the Church had.

That *Erasmus* himself, and many Reformers, were great Enemies to this way of Worship, as it was then Practised in the Church of *Rome*, is no great Wonder, when their Hymns, as well as their Prayers, being performed in an unknown Tongue, all their Singing was mere Noise, which

could contribute nothing to Devotion. But this is no greater Argument against our English Hymns and Anthems, than against our English Prayers. If they meant any thing more, we must demand their Reasons: For as for Authority, our own Reformers, and Reformation have, and that deservedly, a much greater Authority in the World.

But I must hasten to a Conclusion, Which brings me to the Third Thing I proposed, How Musick may and ought to be improved to the Purposes of Devotion: And here I must beg leave to speak something briefly to Three Sorts of Men; *Composers, Singers, and Hearers*; which will serve for the Application of the Whole.

First, As for Composers, Those who set our Hymns and Anthems to Musical Notes. I do not pretend to Skill in Musick, much less to be able to Teach such great Masters as this Age hath Bred; but I hope in some Measure I do, and may be allowed to Understand and Teach Devotion,

tion, which is all I intend in This, for that which according to all the Rules of Art must be allowed for Excellent Musick, may not always be proper for Devotion.

It is a great Mistake in Composing Hymns, and Anthems, to consider only what Notes are Musical, and will Delight and Entertain the Hearers; The true Rule is, What Notes are most proper to Excite or Quicken such Passions of Devotion, as the Words of the Hymn or Anthem Express. This indeed can't be done without Skill in Musick, but true Devotion is the best Director of that Skill; for a Devout Mind will judge of the Devotion, as a Skilful Ear does of the Musick of Sounds: That the most certain way for the greatest Masters to Compose such Hymns and Anthems as are fit for the Worship of God, and may best serve the Devotions of Christians, is to work their own Minds first into all those Heights and Flames of Devotion, which they are to Express in Sounds: which they will find a double Advantage in; it will make them Good Christians, and

and Admirable Composers of Church
Musick.

A Devout Ear without any great Skill
in Musick, soon finds the want of this.

A Grave, Serious Mind, which is the true
Temper of Devotion, is disturbed by Light
and Airy Compositions, which disperse the
Thoughts, and give a Gay and Frisking
Motion to the Spirits, and call the Mind
off from the Praises of God, to attend
merely to the agreeable Variety of Sounds,
which is all that can be expected from such
Sounds as have nothing of Devotion in them;
Which is so much the worse still, when,
(as is now grown very common in such
Compositions) they are clogged with Need-
less and Endless Repetitions. A Repetition
serves only to give an Emphasis, and it
requires a great Judgment to place it Right,
and is very Absurd, when it is placed
Wrong; but we often see, that there is too
little Regard had to this; The Skill of
Altering Notes is the whole Design, which,
when there is not very great occasion for

it,

it is like School-Boys Varying Phrases, ~~like~~ like Ringing the Changes ; which how ~~Ent~~ taining soever it be, when we have nothing to do but to attend to Sounds, is yet very Nauseous and Offensive to Devout Minds in Religious Worship. I thank God, the Ordinary Service of our Church is very Grave and Solemn, and well fitted to Devotion : And as for more Modern Compositions, the Governors of Churches ought to take care to receive nothing into the Worship of God, but what is fitted to serve Devotion ; and this would Effectually Answer the greatest Objections against Church-Musick.

Secondly, As for those who are Employed in Singing the Church-Service and Anthems, to assist the Devotions of the Congregation, it certainly becomes them to behave themselves very Devoutly in it. Musical Instruments, which have no Life and Sense, may Minister to our Devotions, though they are capable of none themselves ; but it gives great Offence and Scandal, to see those who are daily Employed in the Sing-

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ing Praises to God, to shew no Signs of Devotion in themselves, much more by an irreverent Behaviour to betray great Symptoms of want of Devotion. I thank God we have no great reason to make this Complaint in this Church, and, I hope, shall every day have less; but this is a good occasion to mind all such Persons, how Devout they ought to be, (if Musick be a help to Devotion); who have this Advantage from Art and Nature, first to Excite their own Devotions, and then to Assist the Devotions of others; which last must be a very tasteless uneasy Employment, if they have no Devotion of their own. And a great Reproach also to their Art, when they themselves are Witnesses, how little Devotion it Teaches.

But there is one thing, which I believe is not so well considered, which yet is just matter of Scandal; for those who Sing Divine Hymns and Anthems at Church, and whose Profession it is to do so, to Sing Wanton and Amorous, Lewd, Atheistical Songs out of it. Men, who have enter'd them-

themselves into the Service of the Church, have Consecrated their Voices to God; not so, as never to Sing any thing else but Hymns and Anthems, but yet so as never to Sing any thing to the Reproach of God, Religion, or Virtue. This unbecomes any Man, who calls himself a Christian, much more those whose peculiar Employment it is to Sing the Praises of God.

Thirdly, As for Hearers, they ought also to consider, That their business at Church is, not merely to be Entertained with Musick, but to Exercise their Devotions, which is the true End of Church-Musick; to Praise God with the more fervent Passions. It is a Contempt of Religion, and of the House of God, to come only to please our Ears, to hear Better Voices, and more Curious Compositions, and more Artful Singing than we can meet with in other places. This I have reason to fear is the Case of very many who resort hither, who, especially on the Lord's-Day, Crowd into

the Church to hear the Anthem; and when that is over, to the great Disturbance of the Worship of God, and the Scandal of all good Christians, Crowd as fast out again. Though there is this good in it, that they make Room for Devouter People, who immediately fill up their Places, to attend the Instructions of God's Word. But I hope this will not be charged upon the Service of our Church, that Men who have no Devotion, come only for Musick: For Church-Musick can't Create Devotion, tho' it may improve it where it is. But indeed we ought all to be aware that the Musick does not Empty our Thoughts more than our Devotions, which it can never do, if as Common Sense Teaches us, it ought to be, our Minds be in the first place fixt and intent upon the Praises of God, which are Express'd in the Hymn or Anthem; which when conveyed unto us in Musical Sounds, will give Life and Quickness to our Devotions, not first fix'd on the Musick, which most probably will leave the Devotion of the Anthem behind it.

Those

Those who find that Musick does not Assist, but Strife their Devotion, and many such there may be, had much better keep to their Parish-Churches, and prefer Devotion before Musick. For to come to Church without any intention to Worship God in his own House, or to pretend to Worship him without Devotion, are great Affronts to the Divine Majesty.

In a word; Those who profess themselves *Lovers of Musick*, ought to consider, What the true End of Musick is; and to improve it to the Noblest purposes. The meer Harmony of Sounds is a very pleasant and innocent Entertainment: Of all the Delights of Sense, this is in it self the least sensual, when it is not abused to recommend Vice, and to convey impure Images to our Minds: But yet merely to be delighted with Charming and Musical Aires, does not Answer the true Character of a *Lover of Musick*; For it is the least thing in Musick to please the Ear; its proper, natural Use, and the great Advantage and Pleasure of it, relates to our Passions. To Compose,

Soften, to inflame them; and the Divine Passions it inspires us with, the more it is to be admired and valued; and then Musick must attain its greatest Glory and Perfection in true Devotion; That the Lovers of Musick ought to be very Devout Men, if they love Musick for that which is most valuable in it, and its last and noblest End.

To Conclude;

It concerns the Lovers of Musick to vindicate it from all Prophane Abuses; not to suffer so Divine a thing to be prostituted to Mens Lusts: To discountenance all Lewd, Prophane, Atheistical Songs, how admirable soever the Composition be: To preserve Musick in its Virgin Modesty, and without confining her always to the Temple, make the Praises of God her Chief Employment, as it is her greatest Glory.

Thus I have spoke my mind very freely; showed you the Use, and the Abuses of Musick, which was one great Inducement to me to comply with the desires of those

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Honourable and Worthy Persons, who imposed this Office on me, that I might have an Opportunity of saying that which I thought fit should be said at one time or other, and for saying of which, there could not be a more proper Occasion than this.

And I hope this may plead my Excuse with all good Christians, if it have drawn my Sermon out to too great a Length, and given too long an Interruption to the Entertainment of those, the least part of whose business it was to hear a Sermon.

To God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, be Honour, Glory, and Power, Now and Ever. Amen.

As a poor creature of God.

This is a poor book very freely composed for the use of the Apostles of Mankind, which I have intended to give to some with the desire of those who

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